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ABSTRACT

A 1990 survey of 68 records management operations in Wisconsin indicates current practices regarding records retention schedules, retention audits, use of computers, record destruction practices, and the effects of federal legislation on records management operations. The 1990 survey results are compared to similar surveys in the 1970s and 1980s. Results suggest that larger organizations have more stable records management programs than do small organizations and are more likely to have retention schedules. More large organizations have legal representation on retention schedule committees and are more likely to recycle discarded records. The trend over time is in the direction of greater control of records. Records managers appear to have greater responsibilities than in the past. The use of computers has been increasing over the past 15 years, and more than half of the respondents report some degree of computer use in-house. More research is needed to determine whether these trends are nationwide or confined to the Wisconsin area surveys. Eleven figures present study findings. (Author/SLD)

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SURVEY OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN WISCONSIN

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Abstract

A 1990 survey of 68 records management operations in Wisconsin indicates current practices regarding records retention schedules, retention audits, use of computers, record destruction practices, and the effects of federal legislation on records management operations. The 1990 survey results are compared to similar surveys in the 1970s and 1980s.

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In August, 1990, the Research Committee of the Milwaukee Chapter of the Association of Records Managers and Administrators (ARMA) sent a survey to determine records management practices to members of the three ARMA chapters in Wisconsin: Milwaukee, Fox Valley, and Madison. A series of surveys had been done between 1976 and 1984 by the Milwaukee and Madison Chapters with results reported to the memberships by the Milwaukee Chapter Research Committee. Many questions in the 1990 survey were worded the same as those in the earlier studies to make it possible to compare the answers from those surveys with those from the current survey. Special thanks are due to Dr. David Goodman for his leadership as the earlier surveys were conducted and recorded. Dr. Goodman provided results of earlier surveys from his personal files for this report.

The survey results represent records management practices across a wide range of types and sizes of operations. The questions and responses should be helpful reminders to records managers seeking solutions to problems or planning and instituting new policies and procedures. They also may be useful to vendors who need to know what records management practices are common in order to allocate resources among products and services.

The following report on survey results shows how the reported records management situation and procedures have changed by comparing earlier survey results with current results when the

earlier results are available. The report is presented in the same order as the questions on the survey:

- Characteristics of respondents
- Scope of retention schedules
- Responsibility for retention schedules
- Retention audits
- Automation
- Disposition practices
- Effects of federal legislation

Characteristics of respondents

The Milwaukee Chapter of ARMA came into existence in 1948. The Madison Chapter was chartered in 1978, and the Fox Valley Chapter was chartered in 1983. While the Milwaukee Chapter was the only one in existence when the earliest Wisconsin surveys were done, some of the present-day members of the Madison and Fox Valley Chapters were members of the Milwaukee Chapter, and previous survey results in this report represented the entire state.

The three Wisconsin ARMA chapters listed in Table 1, Fox Valley, Madison, and Milwaukee, are in three types of communities. Milwaukee is the seventeenth most populous city in the United States according to the 1990 census, and has the largest industrial/commercial base among the three chapters. The Fox Valley Chapter members are in three cities with substantial industrial and commercial activities. The Madison Chapter is at

the third corner of the Wisconsin tri-chapter triangle. It is the state capital and its population includes 40,000 students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Madison is the least industrialized of the three communities.

Chapter	Primary cities	MSA/CMSA population
Fox Valley	Appleton/Oshkosh/Green Bay	509,715
Madison	Madison/Beloit	419,337
Milwaukee	Milwaukee/Racine	1,607,183

TABLE 1. WISCONSIN CHAPTER AREA POPULATIONS. From Sourcebook of County Demographics: 1990 Census Edition; Volume 1. Fairfax, VA: CACI, 1992.

Chapter	Surveys mailed	Surveys returned	Organizations represented	Vendor members
Fox Valley	53	18	38	15
Madison	60	25	46	16
Milwaukee	72	25	60	15
Totals	185	68	144	46

TABLE 2. SURVEY RETURNS, 1990.

Table 2 shows that 185 surveys were mailed to ARMA members in 1990, and a total of 68 responses were received. Survey recipients were asked in the cover letter to work with any other ARMA members at their organizations and return one completed questionnaire. Since the questions clearly pertained to

organizations, some recipients, such as students and retirees were not expected to respond. Only five of the 45 members who could be identified as vendor representatives responded. Their responses are included in this report, as they were in the earlier surveys to which the current results are compared. The 63 non-vendor responses represent 64% of the 98 non-vendor organizations represented in Wisconsin ARMA chapters in 1990.

Table 3 shows the categories of organizations at which respondents indicated they were employed. The Madison Chapter respondents' relatively high number of respondents in government and low number in manufacturing reflect the fact that state government is one of the largest Madison employers. A 1968 survey of all ARMA members in the United States found that 29% of 867 respondents were at "government agencies" and 17% were in "manufacturing."[1] The 1968 survey included the District of Columbia, and may have reflected a higher proportion of government agencies represented among ARMA members than would a survey without the District of Columbia. The 1982 survey of 92 Milwaukee and Madison Chapter members found 27% in manufacturing and 14% in government.[2] Figure 1 shows that 26% to 44% of Wisconsin ARMA respondents reported manufacturing activity in the seven surveys--clearly more than the 17% found in the 1968 national survey.

Type of business	Fox Valley	Madison	Milwaukee	Total	% of total
Banking/finance	-	4	3	7	10
Education	1	3	3	7	10
Government	2	9	3	14	21
Vendor	2	1	2	5	7
Insurance	1	2	3	6	9
Law	-	-	1	1	1
Manufacturing	9	1	8	18	26
Service	2	2	1	5	7
Communications	-	1	1	2	3
Utility	1	2	-	3	4

TABLE 3. TYPE OF BUSINESS, 1990. Responses to "Type of business (Check one)." The percentages do not total 100% because of rounding error.

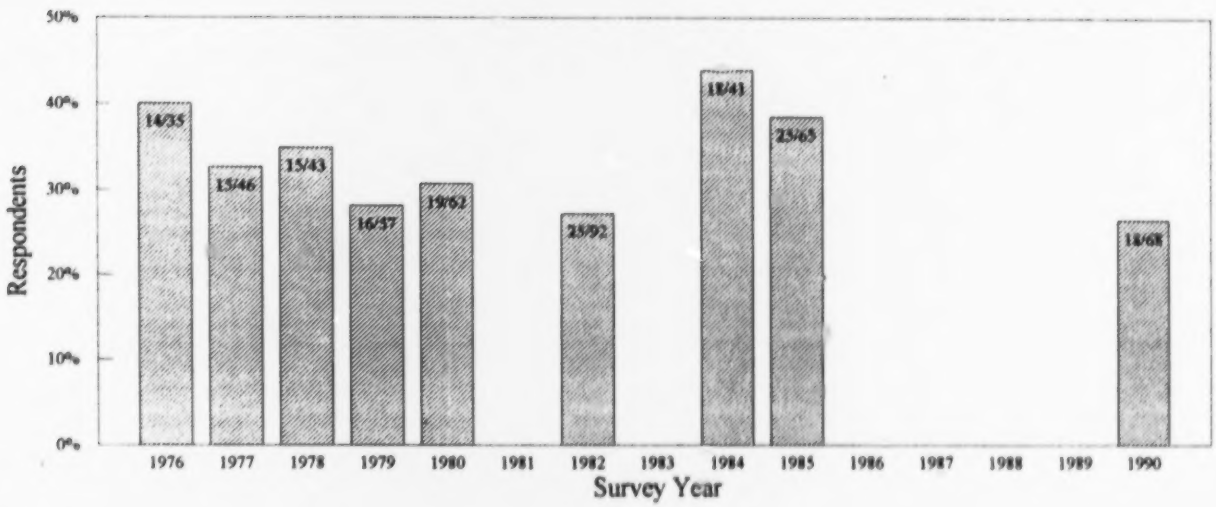


FIGURE 1. FRACTION OF RESPONDENTS IN MANUFACTURING. The 1984 and 1985 surveys did not include the Madison Chapter of ARMA.

The responses from all three chapters shown in Figures 2, 3, and 4 indicate that about half the members work at organizations with fewer than 500 employees. The chapter with the largest city, Milwaukee, was found to have a greater proportion of records management operations at small organizations in the current Wisconsin study than the other two chapters. Sixty percent (15/25) of Milwaukee Chapter respondents who answered the question indicated they were at organizations with fewer than 500 employees, compared to Fox Valley's 39% (7/18) and Madison's 48% (12/25).

The largest organizations and business have more ARMA members than smaller organizations. Fully 99.75% of Wisconsin businesses have fewer than 500 employees,[3] while only 50% of the survey respondents reported fewer than 500 employees at their work-places.

The series of Wisconsin studies has always found the total work force at surveyed organizations to be below 500 members for 33% to 50% of respondents, as shown in Figure 4. A 1975 survey of all ARMA members in the U.S. found that 59% of 860 respondents worked at organizations with an <u>office force</u> of fewer than 500 members.[4] The 1976 Wisconsin study did ask about the office force size, and found more organizations to have under 500 employees than the 1977 or 1978 Wisconsin studies. The Wisconsin surveys after 1976 asked for the size of the local organization work force, not just the office employees, so their results should include operations departments as well as office workers.

If the later Wisconsin surveys had asked about the size of just the office force or if the national survey had asked about the entire work force, the results might have been closer.

As Figure 4 shows, the entire series of studies in Wisconsin found 20-26% of represented organizations to have fewer than 100 employees. Figure 4 also shows that there has been a slight decrease in the percentage of reporting organizations with fewer than 100 employees at the same time as a pronounced increase in the percentage with 100 to 499 employees.

Table 4 shows the number of records management staff members at reporting organizations. Seventeen percent of the 63 respondents to the question indicated clerical staff, but no professional or paraprofessionals in records management. Fourteen percent more reported paraprofessionals but no professionals. Nineteen percent reported one or two professionals, but no paraprofessional, clerical, or student help.

The average number of full-time employee equivalents per records management staff was reported to be 421/63 = 6.7. Insurance companies and utilities, with their large centralized records operations, had larger clerical staffs than other types of organizations. When they were excluded from the data set, along with vendors, who reported high numbers of professionals, the numbers of workers in all four categories were reduced as shown in Table 5. The average number of full-time employee

equivalents per records management staff with the three special-circumstance organizations excluded was 200/49 = 4.1.

Status	Fox Valley		Madison		Milwaukee		Totals		
	n	Total	n	Total	n	Total	n	Total	Average
Professional	10	16	18	34	13	52	41	102	2.5
Paraprofessional	8	8	9	18	5	11	22	37	1.7
Clerical	9	62	15	123	14	76	38	261	6.9
Student	2	5	2	6	4	10	8	21	2.6
Total	16	91	24	181	23	149	63	421	6.7

TABLE 4. NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES IN RECORDS MANAGEMENT, 1990. Responses to the question, "How many full-time equivalent employees are directly involved in your records management program?" The four categories were listed followed by blanks. The n of respondents indicates how many had any workers in each category, e.g., the 102 professional fte are spread among 41 organizations. The averages listed in the last column are based on the two preceding figures, e.g., 102/41 = 2.5 professionals at organizations that have professionals. Sixty-three organizations are represented in the table.

Status	n	Total	Average
Professional	34	52	1.5
Paraprofessional	18	20	1.1
Clerical	30	117	3.9
Student	7	11	1.6
Total	49	200	4.1

TABLE 5. NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES IN RECORDS MANAGEMENT EXCLUDING INSURANCE COMPANIES, UTILITIES, AND VENDORS, 1990. Forty-nine organizations are represented in the table.

FIGURE 2. TOTAL EMPLOYEES AT ORGANIZATIONS, 1990. Responses to the question, "What is the approximate number of employees in your local organization? (Check one.)"

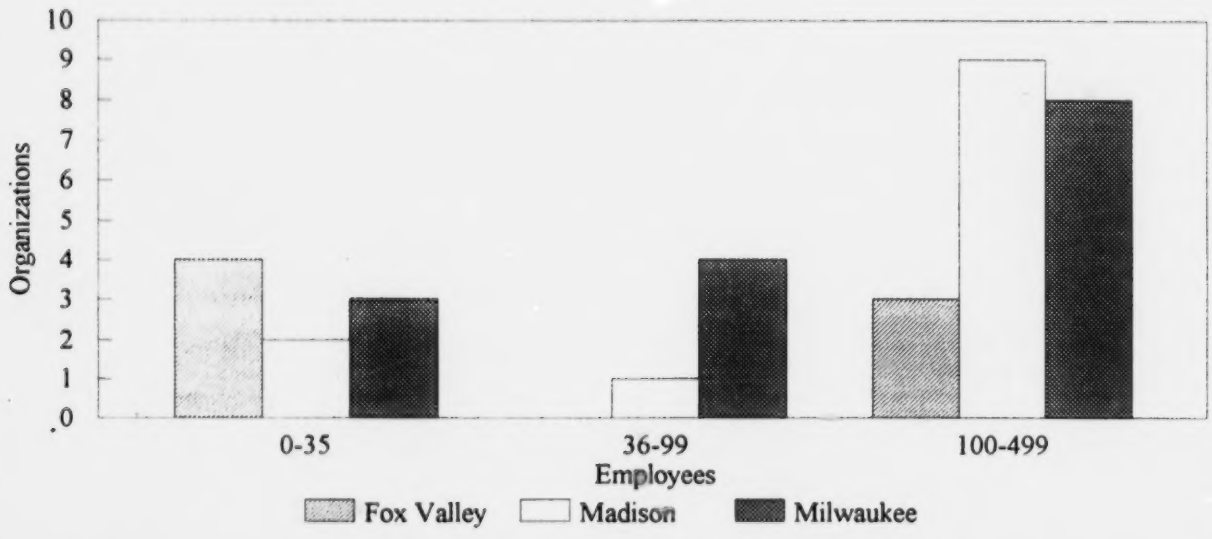


FIGURE 3. TOTAL EMPLOYEES AT ORGANIZATIONS WITH FEWER THAN 500 EMPLOYEES, 1990.

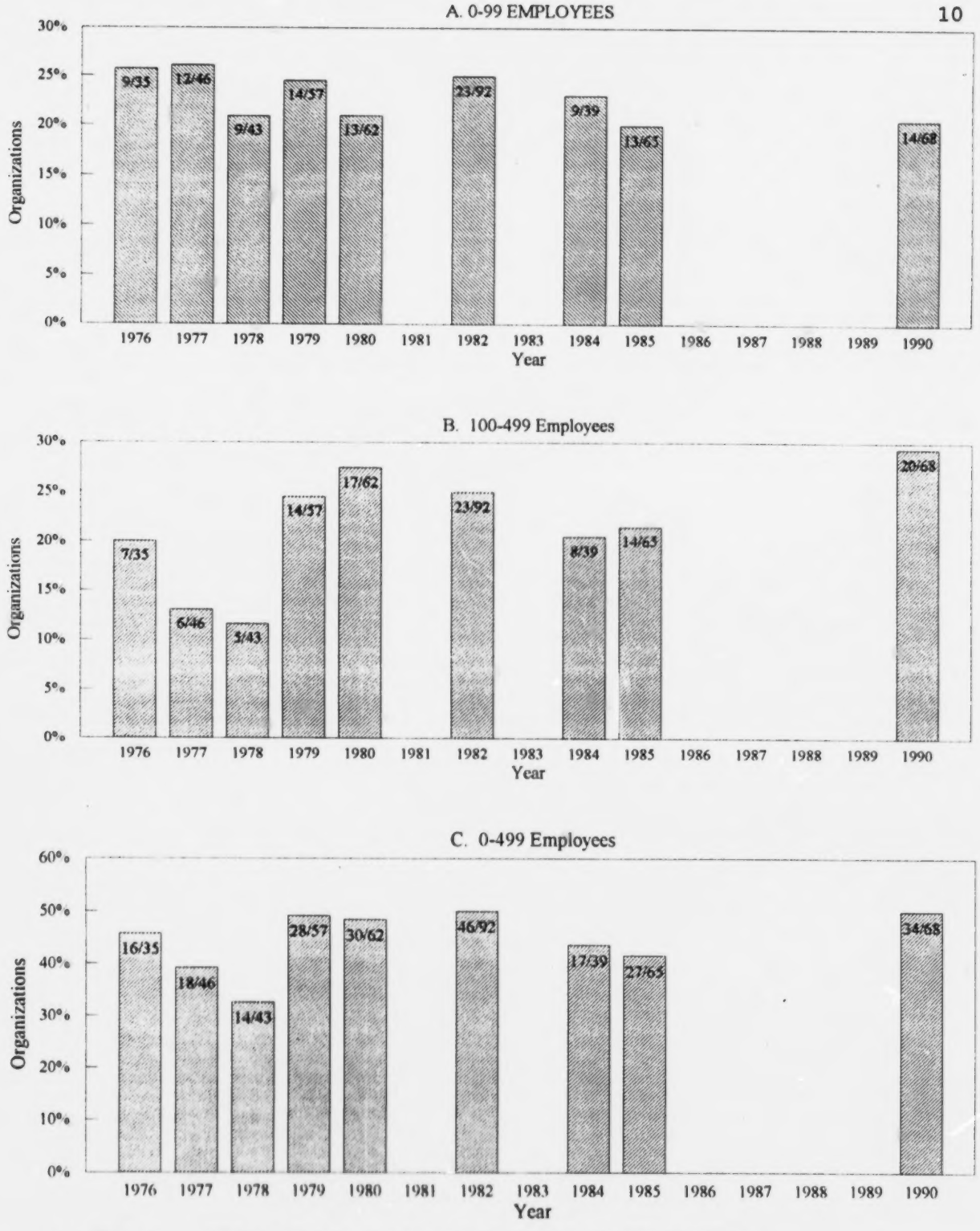


FIGURE 4. CHANGES IN SMALL ORGANIZATION WORKFORCES.

As Table 6 shows, 52% (35/67) of respondents who answered the question reported that records management was a recognized program where they worked. The proportion of yes answers was reported to be higher in prior surveys, but the question was different in that it did not specify that records management should be on the organizational chart. The percentage of yes answers in 1976 was 69%; 1978, 67%; 1980, 74%; 1982, 74%; and 1984, 68%.

Chapter	Recognized program?		
	Yes	No	% yes
Fox Valley	9	8	53
Madison	14	11	56
Milwaukee	12	13	48
Totals	35	32	52

TABLE 6. RECOGNIZED RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS, 1990. The question was phrased "Is the function of records management recognized as a program by management, i.e., is it on the organizational chart?"

Scope of retention schedules

The thoroughness of coverage, longevity, contents, and format of retention schedules at organizations represented in ARMA chapters were examined.

Table 7 shows that 83% (55/66) of respondents who answered the question reported that a retention schedule was in place. The 1977 ARMA-Milwaukee study found that 84% (37/44) of

respondents said they had retention schedules. According to Robek, Maedke, and Brown, "in the 1985 national survey conducted by James Bennett (University of Texas at Austin), 95 percent of the respondents had implemented a retention program in their organizations."[5] The phrasing of questions in the national survey or the criteria for selecting survey participants may have caused it to find the comparatively high 95% implementation rate.

Larger organizations reported retention schedules more frequently than smaller ones. When the responses in Table 7 were compared to organization size as represented in Figures 2 and 3, the Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient, r=.26, was found to have a significance level of .03.

Chapter	Retention schedules?		
	Yes	No	% yes
Fox Valley	14	3	82
Madison	22	3	88
Milwaukee	19	5	79
Totals	55	11	83

TABLE 7. RETENTION SCHEDULES, 1990. "Does your organization presently have retention schedules?"

Figure 5 shows that 56% (28/50) of respondents with retention schedules who answered the question reported that over 60% of their organizations' records were scheduled. The 1977 ARMA-Milwaukee study found that 54% (20/37) of respondents reported that they had retention schedules covering all records

at their organizations. That figure is surprising, because records managers with mature operations respected for their completeness have indicated in interviews outside this study that their schedules include only 50% to 60% of their organizations' records.

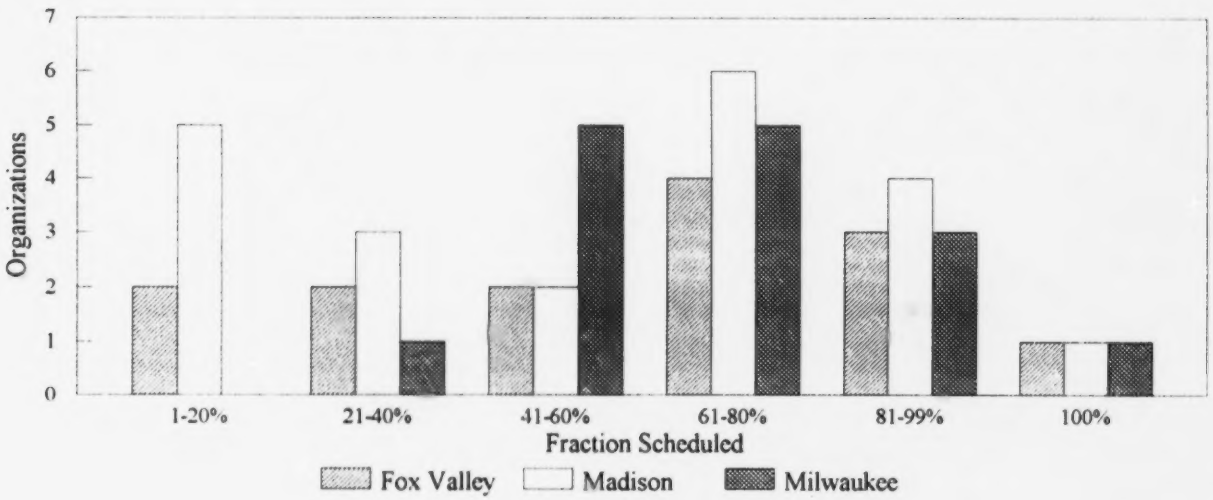


FIGURE 5. FRACTION OF RECORDS SCHEDULED. "What fraction of your organization's records, including computer files, are listed on the schedules?" Respondents checked a box corresponding to one of the above categories.

Table 8 shows the relative amounts of various media reported to be used at organizations and controlled in their retention schedules in 1990 and 1982. Not surprisingly, a smaller fraction of media used least widely, e.g., maps and audio-visual material, is included in retention schedules. There is less incentive to

control small amounts of records than large amounts of records. Infrequent inclusion in record retention schedules also may reflect factors such as the perception of records managers regarding the importance of entering the materials on the schedules to be ready for litigation, difficulty in finding guidance in published literature, and the difficulty of categorizing the materials with other similar records. The 1976 ARMA-Milwaukee survey asked "Does your company use microfilm in your records program?" Seventy-seven percent (27/35) responded yes. As Table 8 shows, the positive responses dropped to 63% in 1982, then rose back to 80% in 1990. Some microfiche-only users may have said yes to the microfilm question in 1976 because there was no adjacent question about microfiche.

Table 9 shows the results of a survey of U.S. companies in 1982[6] compared to the results of the current survey for media listed in both. The reason for the major differences is not clear. It is possible that the phrasing of the 1982 national survey allowed respondents to say unscheduled records kept permanently were the same as scheduled records. It is also possible that the companies surveyed in 1982 were preselected to assure that they used the listed media.

Medium	Chapter	Used?			Controlled?			Used in 1982?		
		Yes	No	% yes	Yes	No	% yes	Yes	No	% yes
Computer tape	Fox Valley	14	3	82	8	4	67			
	Madison	21	3	88	11	7	61			
	Milwaukee	18	5	78	8	7	53			
	Totals	53	11	83	27	18	60	45	47	49
Computer disk	Fox Valley	16	1	94	8	5	62			
	Madison	20	4	83	9	9	50			
	Milwaukee	21	2	91	9	8	53			
	Totals	57	7	89	26	22	54	46	46	50
Computer printouts	Fox Valley	15	2	88	11	1	92			
	Madison	22	2	92	12	7	63			
	Milwaukee	22	1	96	12	6	67			
	Totals	59	5	92	35	14	71	84	8	91
Drawings, schematics, blueprints	Fox Valley	13	4	76	6	5	55			
	Madison	19	5	79	7	9	44			
	Milwaukee	13	10	57	5	6	45			
	Totals	45	19	70	18	20	47	47	45	51
Maps	Fox Valley	5	12	29	1	4	20			
	Madison	12	12	50	2	8	20			
	Milwaukee	8	15	35	1	5	17			
	Totals	25	39	39	4	17	19	29	63	32
Paper	Fox Valley	12	5	71	11	0	100			
	Madison	21	3	88	14	4	78			
	Milwaukee	19	4	83	13	2	87			
	Totals	52	12	81	38	6	86	88	4	96
Tab cards	Fox Valley	4	13	24	1	2	33			
	Madison	7	17	29	4	3	57			
	Milwaukee	5	18	22	2	2	50			
	Totals	6	48	25	7	7	50	36	56	39

TABLE 8. MEDIA USED AND MEDIA CONTROLLED (concluded on next page).

Medium	Chapter	Used?			Controlled?			Used in 1982?		
		Yes	No	% yes	Yes	No	% yes	Yes	No	% yes
Aperture cards	Fox Valley	7	10	41	4	1	80			
	Madison	9	15	38	3	5	38			
	Milwaukee	8	15	35	4	4	50			
	Totals	24	40	38	11	10	52	32	60	35
Photographs	Fox Valley	11	6	65	3	6	33			
	Madison	17	7	71	7	7	50			
	Milwaukee	13	10	57	5	6	45			
	Totals	41	23	64	15	19	44	40	52	44
Microfilm	Fox Valley	13	4	76	9	1	90			
	Madison	21	3	88	17	3	85			
	Milwaukee	17	6	74	11	4	73			
	Totals	51	13	80	37	8	82	58	34	63
Microfiche	Fox Valley	14	3	82	9	1	90			
	Madison	20	4	83	15	4	79			
	Milwaukee	20	3	87	11	7	61			
	Totals	54	10	84	35	12	74	66	26	72
Audio-video	Fox Valley	12	5	71	2	8	20			
	Madison	15	9	63	7	6	54			
	Milwaukee	10	13	43	4	5	44			
	Totals	37	27	58	13	19	41			
Other	Fox Valley	0	17	0	-	-	-			
	Madison	2	22	9	2	0	100			
	Milwaukee	3	20	15	1	2	33			
	Totals	5	59	8	3	2	60			

TABLE 8. MEDIA USED AND MEDIA CONTROLLED. "Which of the following record media are used at your organization? Which have retention periods controlled by a retention schedule?" The answers to the question about control are taken from only those who responded that they used a given medium, e.g., of the 53 who said computer tape was used, 27 said it was controlled, 18 said it was not controlled, and 8 did not answer the second question. The percentages are computed from the totals in the preceding columns of figures, e.g., 53/64 of the respondents reported using computer tape, and 27/45 of the responding users reported controlling it. The figures in the last two columns are taken from the report on the 1982 survey "Records Disposition Practices," Records Management Quarterly 16:4 (October 1982): 50. The percentages reported for 1982 may be deceptively low because non-responses were treated as "no" answers in that report.

Medium	1982 survey of companies			1990 Wisconsin survey		
	Yes	Total	Fraction	Yes	Total	Fraction
Blueprints	38	67	57%	18	64	28%
Computer cards	13	67	19%	7	64	11%
Maps	35	67	52%	4	64	6%
Photographs	46	67	69%	15	64	23%
Computer tapes	17	67	25%	27	64	42%

TABLE 9. MEDIA CONTROLLED AT ORGANIZATIONS, NATIONALLY IN 1982 AND IN WISCONSIN IN 1990. The 1982 figures are from Barbara A. Christensen, Ed.D., "An Analysis of Active Storage Areas, Equipment, and Supplies," Records Management Quarterly 16:2 (April 1982): 58.

Figure 6 shows how long the respondents to the 1990 survey reported that retention schedules had been in effect at their organizations. Figure 7 shows how many respondents reported their schedules had been in effect for fewer than ten years at the time of three surveys. The Wisconsin data are supported to some extent by a 1975 nationwide ARMA study, which found that over half the records management programs reported at that time had come into existence during the preceding 8 years, and approximately one-third were less than five years old.[7] Thirty-five percent (18/51) of the respondents to the current Wisconsin study indicated that their retention schedules had been in effect for 5 or fewer years, and 57% (29/51) indicated that their retention schedules had been in existence for 10 or fewer years. The fact that the high proportion of youthful programs reported has not decreased since 1975 is troubling, because the membership

of ARMA is not increasing rapidly enough to reflect the addition of new members from that many new programs. ARMA membership would have to be doubling every ten years with the new members all in youthful records management programs to account for all the new records management programs. Possible explanations for the discrepancy include: (a) records management programs are appearing and disappearing in cycles, (b) respondents are unaware of the history of their own programs, or (c) members of ARMA are not staying in ARMA long after they get into the records management business.

Larger organizations have older records management programs. When the retention schedule age shown in Figure 6 was compared with the size of reporting organizations shown in Figures 2 and 3, the correlation, r=.46, was found to have a significance level of .001.

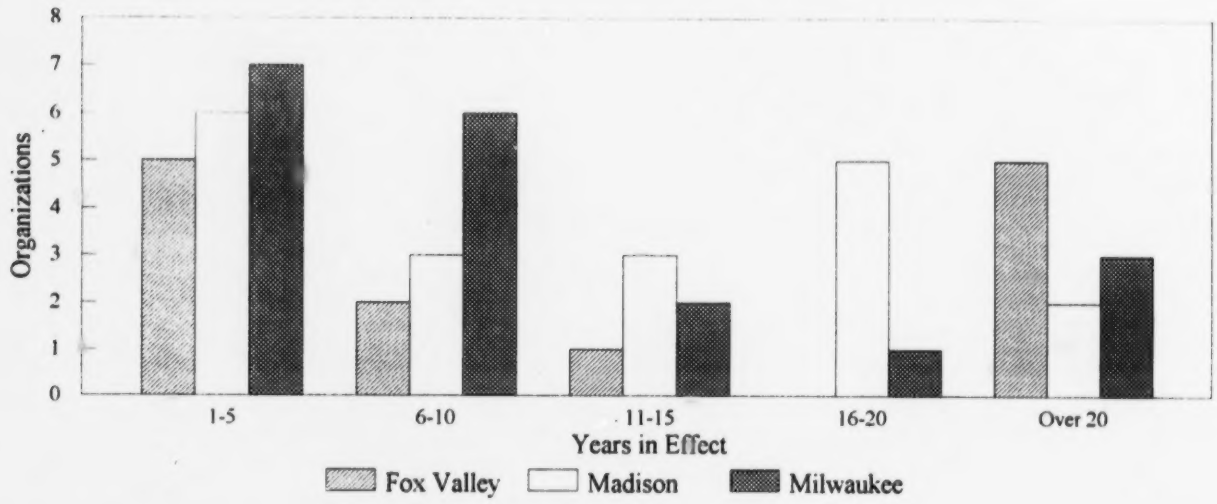


FIGURE 6. RETENTION SCHEDULE AGE, 1990. "How long have you had retention schedules in effect at your organization?" Respondents checked a blank to match one of the five categories.

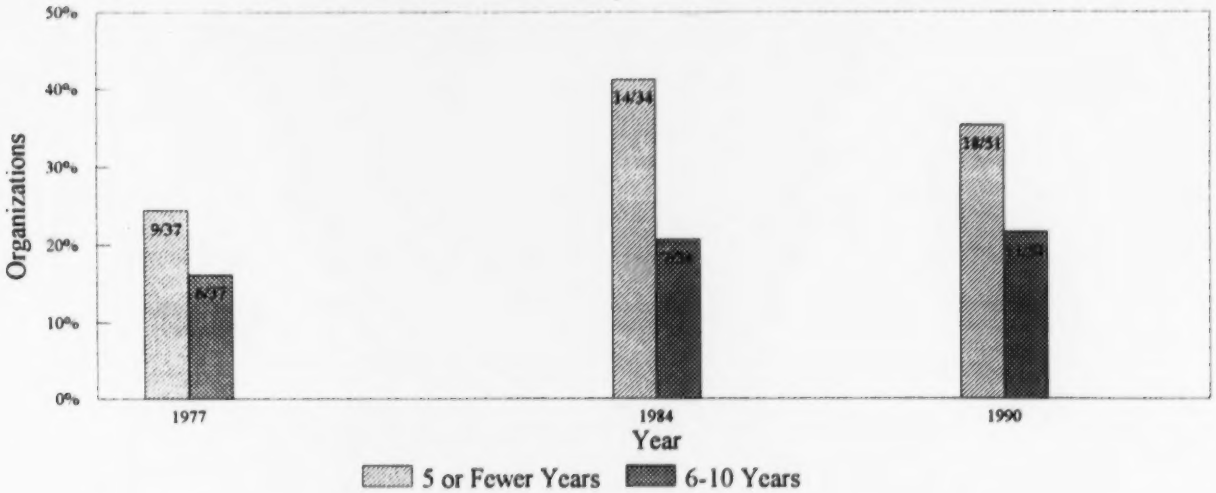


FIGURE 7. ORGANIZATIONS WITH RECENTLY CREATED RETENTION SCHEDULES. The question in the 1984 survey was "How long has your records management program been in operation?" The question in 1977 and 1990 was "How long have you had retention schedules in effect?"

Table 10 shows fields included in retention schedules. Fifty-four of the 68 respondents to the question in the 1990 survey indicated that the organizations they served had retention schedules. "Form number" and "form title" were ambiguous in both the 1977 and 1990 surveys in that they could have been interpreted to refer to numbers and titles of listed documents or of the retention schedule form itself. Differences among the three ARMA Chapters surveyed, e.g., for "form title," "vital status," and "schedule number," may be due to advice from different local authorities or vendors. "Other" entries reported included archival, stored at records center, stored off-site, responsible operating unit code, approval signature, statute chapters, related statutes, security classification, number of cubic feet per year, and volume number.

Field	Fox Valley		Madison		Milwaukee		1990 totals		1977 totals		Percent yes	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1990	1977
Ret. period, destr. date	10	2	16	3	12	2	38	7	18	9	84	67
Distribution	3	9	5	14	2	12	10	35	7	20	22	26
Form title	6	6	9	10	11	3	26	19	21	7	58	75
Record title	11	1	14	5	12	2	37	8			82	
Record type/ description	10	2	14	5	11	3	35	10			78	
Form number	7	5	8	11	7	7	22	23	19	8	49	70
Line number	1	11	-	19	-	14	1	44	4	23	2	15
Vital status	5	7	8	11	3	11	16	29	12	15	36	44
Index terms	2	10	6	13	2	12	10	35			22	
Location of original copy	8	4	7	12	5	9	20	25	12	15	44	44
Microform status	6	6	6	13	6	8	18	27	12	15	40	44
Mode of destruction	5	7	5	14	7	7	17	28	12	15	38	44
Schedule number	7	5	12	7	5	9	24	21	9	18	53	33
Report number	4	8	4	15	4	10	12	33	9	18	27	33
Stored in department	7	5	10	9	9	5	26	19	13	14	58	48
Stored elsewhere	6	6	10	9	8	6	24	21	13	14	53	48
Other feature	2	10	1	18	4	10	7	38	15	12	16	56

TABLE 10. RETENTION SCHEDULE FIELDS. "If a specific format is used, the information contained in your (retention schedule) form is:" Respondents checked blanks by each listed option. It was assumed that if a respondent indicated that any fields were present on the schedule, not checking other fields indicated that they were absent and were equivalent to a "no" answer.

Responsibility for retention schedules

Table 11 shows the number of respondents whose organizations require creation of entries in their retention schedules when new records come into existence. The eleven percent increase in the fraction of respondents from 1977 to 1990 indicates that control of records has become more active since the first survey.

Chapter	Schedule required?		
	Yes	No	% yes
Fox Valley	3	10	23
Madison	11	10	52
Milwaukee	7	11	39
1990 totals	21	31	40
1977 totals	12	29	29

TABLE 11. REQUIRED RETENTION SCHEDULE ENTRIES FOR NEW RECORDS. "Does your program require that a retention schedule (entry) be established at the time of creation of forms, reports, or other documents?" One of the "no" answers for Madison included a comment that it had to be done within one year of creation.

Chapter	Committee used?		
	Yes	No	% yes
Fox Valley	3	9	25
Madison	9	9	50
Milwaukee	9	10	47
1990 totals	21	28	43
1977 totals	14	27	34

TABLE 12. COMMITTEE GENERATION OF RETENTION SCHEDULES. "Is a committee used for establishing retention schedules?"

Table 12 indicates that there has been an increase from 34% of organizations that made committees responsible for establishing retention schedules in 1977 to 43% in 1990.

Table 13 shows who is represented on retention schedule committees. Not surprisingly, the records manager and the legal department were most frequently represented. The decrease in involvement of the accounting department and the increase in the involvement of the internal auditing department are the most visible changes occurring with time. "Other" committee representation reported in the 1990 responses included registrar, counseling, student services, records center supervisor, MIS, state records & forms board, archivist, outside consultant, forms manager, judges, court administrators, administrator, medical services administrator, and varying, depending on area.

The average number of functions represented on retention schedule committees dropped from 3.9 in 1977 to 3.4 in 1990. When representation of each function on a retention schedule committee was compared with organization size (Figure 2), the Pearson's correlation between size and presence of an operating department official, r=-.26, was found to have a significance level of .21. The correlation between size and presence of a legal representative was r=.41 (significance level .04). The positive correlation between size and legal representation may result from a greater fraction of large organizations employing attorneys than small organizations. The negative correlation between size and operations department representation may reflect fewer professional non-operations departments from which to draw

representatives in small organizations. There was little or no correlation between organization size and presence of committee members from other functions.

Representative	Fox Valley		Madison		Milwaukee		1990 totals		1977 totals		Percent yes	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1990	1977
Accounting	1	4	3	8	4	5	8	16	8	6	33	57
Legal	4	1	5	6	6	3	15	10	9	5	60	64
Operating department official	3	2	6	5	4	5	13	12	8	6	52	57
Tax	2	3	1	10	2	7	5	19	4	10	21	29
Auditing	2	3	3	8	6	3	11	14	2	12	44	14
Outside agency	-	5	3	8	1	8	4	21			16	
Records analyst	2	3	1	10	-	9	3	21	4	10	12	29
Records manager	3	2	6	5	6	3	14	10	8	6	58	57
Other	1	4	5	6	4	5	10	15	11	3	40	79

TABLE 13. REPRESENTATION ON RETENTION SCHEDULE COMMITTEE. "If a committee is used, who comprises such a committee?" Respondents checked blanks by entries.

Table 14 shows reported responsibility for final approval of retention schedules. The legal representative, operating department official, and records manager each have the responsibility in more cases than the retention committee as a whole. "Other" authorities included registrar, audit, Bank Administration Institute, corporate secretary, city records committee, state records & forms board (twice), archives, accounting, auditing, internal auditor, common council, board (educational institution), state supreme court, and PRFB. The

increase since 1977 in the number of parties declared to have responsibility for retention decisions is one of the most dramatic found in the survey. An average of 2.1 responsible parties per organization (109 parties at 51 organizations) was reported in 1990, compared to 1.1 in 1977 (47 parties at 42 organizations). The increases are apparent in every listed category of decision-makers.

Authority	Fox Valley		Madison		Milwaukee		1990 totals		1977 totals		Percent yes	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1990	1977
Legal	9	3	11	9	10	9	30	21	15	27	59	36
Operating department official	6	6	10	10	7	12	23	28	12	30	45	29
Tax	2	10	1	19	5	14	8	43	4	38	16	10
Retention Committee	2	10	4	16	3	16	9	42	3	39	18	7
Records analyst	2	10	2	18	0	19	4	47	0	42	8	0
Records manager	4	8	10	10	8	11	22	29	8	34	43	19
Other	2	10	6	14	5	14	13	38	5	37	25	12

TABLE 14. AUTHORITY OVER RETENTION SCHEDULE. "Who makes final approval on retention schedules before they are applied? (Check all that apply.)"

The 1977 and 1990 Wisconsin results are very different from the results of a national 1975 ARMA survey, which found that 48% (419/867) of respondents reported a "combination of areas" had "responsibility for approval of records retention schedules." The 1975 national study found that the "law department was responsible only in 33 cases (4%), top management 108 cases (13%), and department heads 107 cases (12%). Records management

personnel were not listed among the entries in the survey results.[8]

Source	Chapter	Have?			Use?		
		Yes	No	% yes	Yes	No	% yes
Federal government	Fox Valley	9	1	90	5	4	56
	Madison	10	7	59	7	2	78
	Milwaukee	9	8	53	4	2	67
	TOTALS	28	16	64	16	8	67
State government	Fox Valley	6	4	60	5	1	83
	Madison	11	6	65	8	2	80
	Milwaukee	7	10	41	3	1	75
	TOTALS	24	20	55	16	4	80
Local government	Fox Valley	3	7	30	2	1	67
	Madison	2	14	13	2	0	100
	Milwaukee	3	14	18	2	0	100
	TOTALS	8	35	19	6	1	86
Commercially published	Fox Valley	9	1	90	7	2	78
	Madison	6	11	35	4	1	80
	Milwaukee	10	7	59	6	1	86
	TOTALS	25	19	57	17	4	81
Another organization	Fox Valley	4	6	40	2	2	50
	Madison	7	10	41	7	0	100
	Milwaukee	5	12	29	5	0	100
	TOTALS	16	28	36	14	2	88

TABLE 15. MODEL SCHEDULES, 1990. "Do you have or use (retention) schedules from outside your organization as models?" Respondents checked blanks to indicate they had or used schedules from the indicated sources. It was assumed that if one or more blanks were checked, unchecked blanks were a "no" answer. The "Use?" column shows only the cases where items are owned, e.g., of the 28 organizations that have federal government retention schedules, 16 use them, 8 do not, and 4 did not check any answers in the "Use?" column. The percentage columns are based on the numbers in the preceding columns, e.g., of the 24 who answered the "Use?" question for federal schedules, 16 said yes; 16/24 = 67%.

Table 15 indicates reported use of retention schedules from outside organizations as models. The 1977 ARMA-Milwaukee survey asked the same question with just the federal, state, and local government options to check. A greater fraction of 1977 respondents reported having outside retention schedules to use as models than 1990 respondents. Ninety-one percent (32/35) of respondents in 1977 reported they had federal retention schedules, 63% (22/35) had state schedules, and 31% (11/35) had local government schedules.

The 1990 survey asked "What reference books are used in your retention scheduling program?" Four blanks were provided for answers. The 72 responses included 30 items that could be identified as government documents, 29 textbooks or reference books, and 9 documents from professional associations.

Table 16 indicates the departments reported to be in charge of the official copy of the retention schedule at 48 responding organizations in 1990 and 26 in 1977. The "records management" responses dropped from 69% in 1977 to 58% in 1990.

Table 17 and Figure 8 show the departments reported to receive copies of retention schedules at responding organizations. There has been a substantive increase in the number of schedules given to operations departments since the 1977 survey. The percentage of organizations where all departments have copies of all schedules increased from 4% (2/46) in 1977 to 22% (11/49) in 1990. The percentage of organizations where all departments received partial schedules increased from 30% (14/46) to 43% (21/49).

"Other" recipients in 1990 were auditing, internal auditing, archives, complete schedules available on request, common council, city clerk, board (educational institution), adm serv/info resources, court administrators & judges, and applicable records coordinators.

1990			1977		
Office	n	Percent	Office	n	Percent
Records management	28	58	Records management	18	69
Administrative office services	10	21	Accounting/ Auditing	3	12
Legal	3	6	Legal	1	4
Local affected offices	2	4	Other	4	15
Engineering and support	2	4			
Accounting	1	2			
Information resources	1	2			
Purchasing	1	2			

TABLE 16. OFFICE WITH RETENTION SCHEDULE MASTER. "What office retains the master copy of your retention schedule?" Respondents filled in a blank. The answers were categorized at the time of analysis. The "n" column shows the number of responses.

Figure 9 shows the policy regarding frequency of update for retention schedules. Responses indicate that the percentage of respondents using a rotating schedule doubled, but the numbers are so low that it was still only 17% of the total. The "when required" response is ambiguous in that it could be interpreted as when needed, when ordered to, or when scheduled.

Department	Fox Valley			Madison			Milwaukee			1990 totals			1977 totals		
	All	Part	No	All	Part	No	All	Part	No	All	Part	No	All	Part	No
All Departments	4	5	3	4	8	8	3	8	6	11	21	17	2	14	30
Accounting	3	2	7	1	2	17	2	3	12	6	7	36	6	7	33
Legal	3	0	9	5	1	14	4	0	13	12	1	36	12	1	33
Operating	0	6	6	3	7	10	0	7	10	3	20	26	6	11	29
Records	5	0	7	12	1	7	10	0	7	27	1	21	21	0	25
Tax	2	1	9	1	2	17	3	0	14	6	3	40	4	5	37
Other	0	1	11	4	2	14	2	0	15	6	3	40	1	4	41

TABLE 17. RETENTION SCHEDULE RECIPIENTS. "Who receives copies of your (retention) schedules? (Please write a P on the line if they receive a partial schedule and a C if they receive a complete schedule for the entire organization.)" Respondents wrote P or C on a blank line next to each listed option. It was assumed that if a respondent indicated any recipient, any other blanks not marked were equivalent to "no" answers. When respondents indicated "all depts" but did not give a positive response for the other six categories, the other six category answers were interpreted as "no," on the assumption that some of the listed departments may not exist at their organizations.

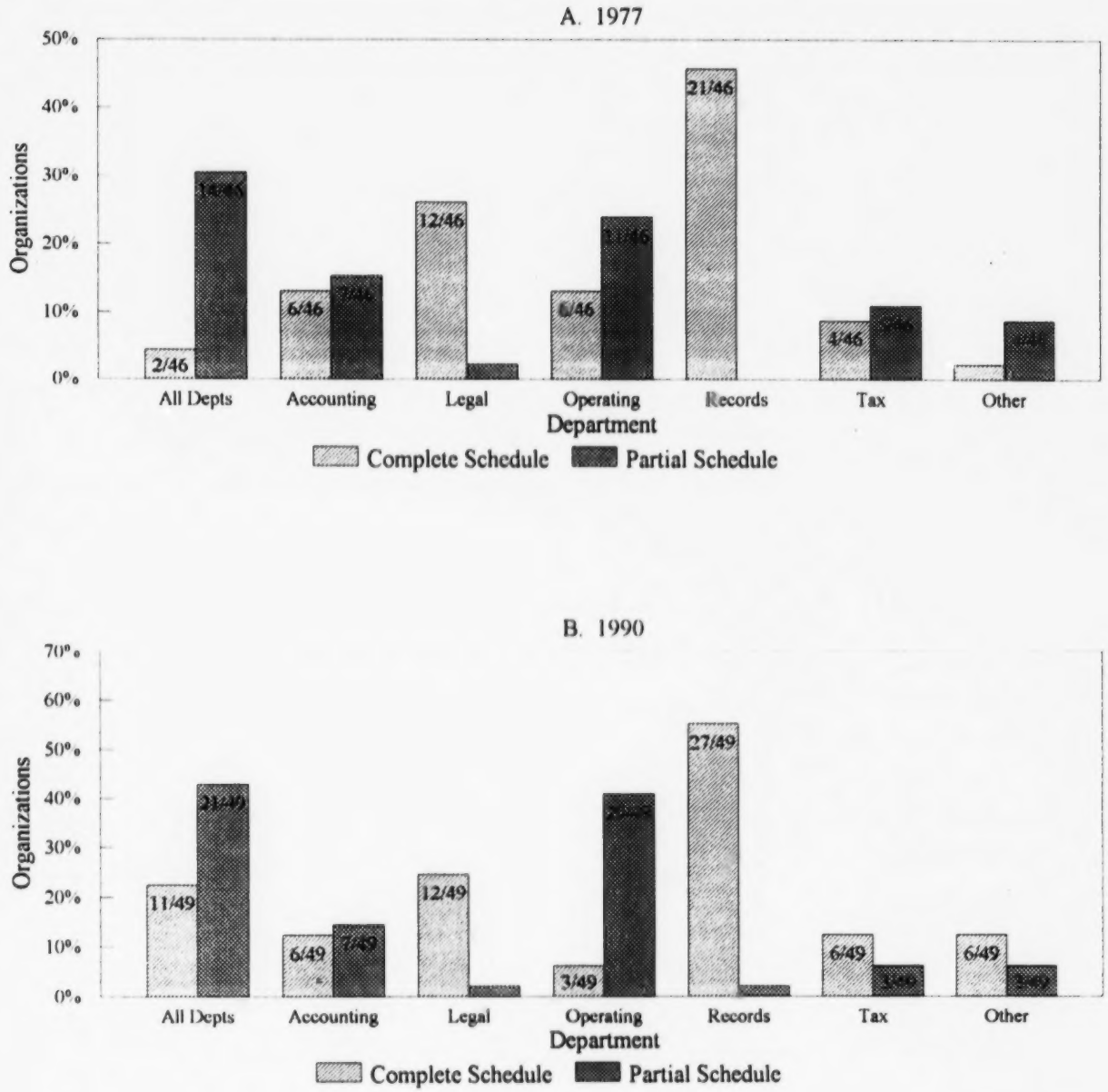
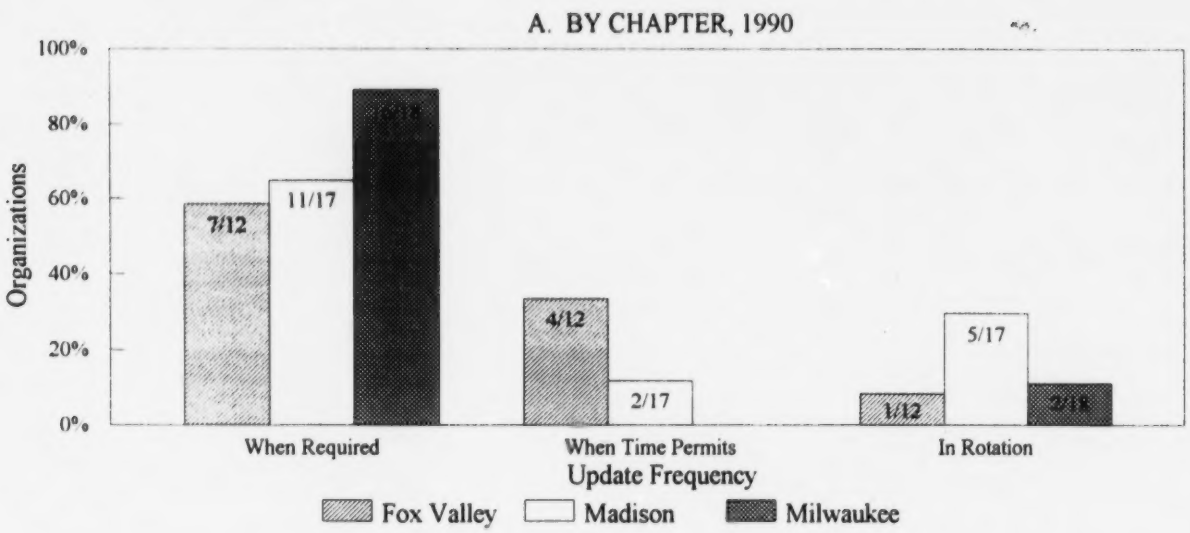


FIGURE 8. RETENTION SCHEDULE RECIPIENTS.



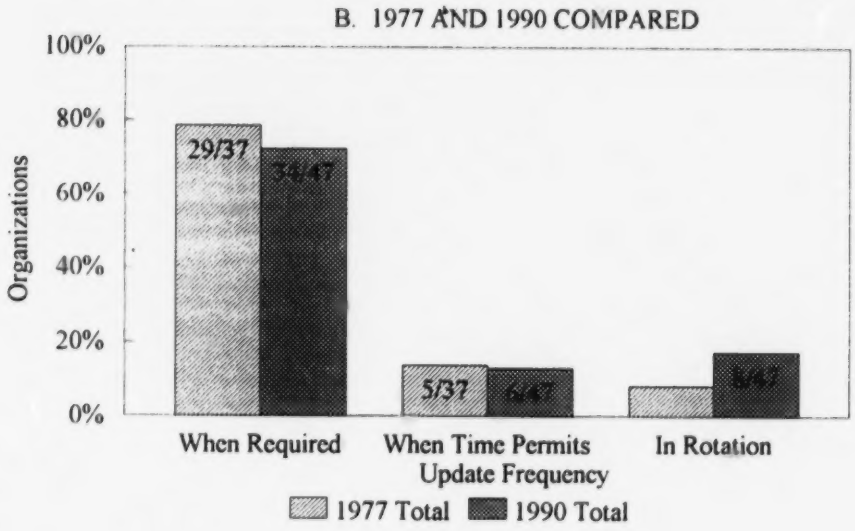


FIGURE 9. SCHEDULE UPDATE FREQUENCY. "How frequently are retention schedules updated?" Respondents checked one of three options.

Retention audits

Table 18 shows the number of respondents who reported that internal auditing checks compliance with the retention schedule. There is little indication of change since 1977. The survey did not ask if organizations had an internal auditing department.

Correlation between internal auditing responsibility and organization size was checked on the hypothesis that larger organizations would be more likely to have auditing departments and that would result in positive correlation. The correlation was positive, but the correlation was only r=.14 with a significance level of .34.

Chapter	Does auditing check?		
	Yes	No	% yes
Fox Valley	5	6	45
Madison	7	12	37
Milwaukee	8	8	50
1990 totals	20	26	43
1977 totals	14	21	40

TABLE 18. INTERNAL AUDITING RETENTION CHECK. "Do your company auditors, during their audit, check for compliance with the retention schedule?"

Figure 10 shows the reported frequency of retention audits. The fraction of respondents reporting annual audits decreased from 48% (14/29) in 1977 to 10% (5/48) in 1990. There was a clear movement from annual audits to continuous audits between

1977 and 1990. The proportion of "continuously" answers to "annually" increased dramatically. There were 10 reports of continuous auditing and 14 reports of annual auditing in 1977. There were 14 reports of continuous auditing and only 5 reports of annual auditing in 1990.

The 1977 survey results did not offer "never" as a response option, so respondents who never had audits done in 1977 probably did not respond to the question. If the 15 "never" responses are excluded from the 1990 sample as they were in 1977 to provide more similar conditions for comparison, the 1990 "annually" responses increase from 10% to 15% and "continuously" responses increase from 29% to 42%. There were 17 "no reply" responses out of 46 in the 1977 study (37%), compared with 29% (20/68) in 1990.

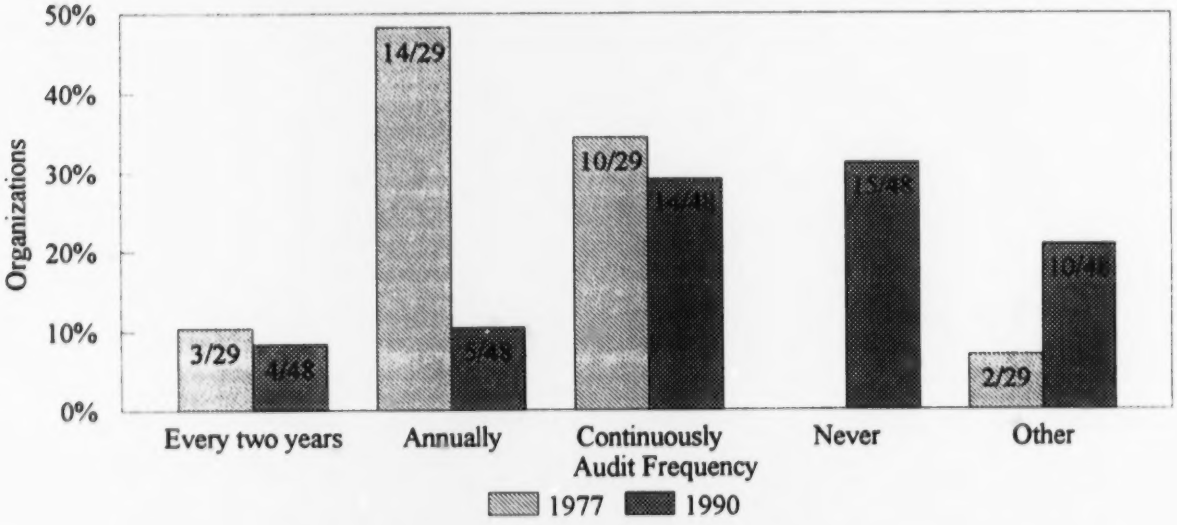


FIGURE 10. RETENTION AUDIT FREQUENCY. "How frequently are retention audits conducted?" Respondents checked a blank by the selected option. "Other" frequencies were per audit department schedule, as needed, irregular, as time allows or specific problem exists, periodically, at the time we are recontacted by that office, nonscheduled, as requested, at least once every 10 years, and seldom. "Never" was not an option in 1977.

Table 19 shows who was reported to conduct retention audits. The records manager was reported to be responsible for the audits by 47% (17/36) of the respondents in 1990, but only 33% (11/33) in 1977.

Auditing representative	Fox Valley		Madison		Milwaukee		1990 totals		1977 totals		Percent yes	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1990	1977
Internal auditors	5	4	3	11	5	8	13	23	11	22	36	33
Outside agency	1	8	2	12	1	12	4	32	3	30	11	9
Records analyst	0	9	3	11	2	11	5	31	4	29	14	12
Records manager	4	5	10	4	3	10	17	19	11	22	47	33
Other	1	8	2	12	3	10	6	30	4	29	17	12

TABLE 19. AUDITORS. "Who conducts the retention audit? (Check one or more.)" The multiple responses were "internal auditors and outside agency" twice, "internal auditors and records manager," "internal auditors and records analyst," "outside agency and records manager," "records analyst and records manager," "records analyst and other (district court administrators)," and "records manager and other (departmental sponsor)." "Other" auditors included departmental sponsor, district court administrators, records technician, field administrative personnel from home office, accounting, and legal. The percentages for 1990 total more than 100 because of multiple answers. There were apparently no multiple answers to the question in 1977, though it was phrased exactly the same.

Automation

Table 20 shows the functions that respondents reported to be computerized. Sixty-six percent (45/68) of respondents to the 1990 survey indicated that one or more of the listed functions was computerized. The 1977 ARMA-Milwaukee study asked about three of the reported functions. Seven respondents (18%) indicated their retention schedules were "placed on computer,"

and 32 (82%) said they were not. The seven with computerized schedules were asked if the computer was used for "destruction identification." Four of the seven (57%) said yes. Two of the seven (29%) said yes when asked if the computerized schedule

Function	Fox Valley		Madison		Milwaukee		1990 totals		1977 totals		Percent yes	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1990	1977
Retention schedule generation	8	2	8	5	9	13	25	20	7	32	56	18
Destruction scheduling	6	4	8	5	11	11	25	20	4	35	56	10
Scheduling record transfers	1	9	4	9	4	18	9	36			20	
Checking records out of the records center	2	8	4	9	7	15	13	32			29	
Searching for records by department ID	6	4	8	5	8	14	22	23			49	
Searching by word in title or description	4	6	8	5	8	14	20	25			44	
Finding box numbers and drawer IDs	6	4	5	8	11	11	22	23	2	37	49	5
Automated retrieval of the documents themselves	1	9	1	12	2	20	4	41			9	
Other	1	9	1	12	3	19	5	40			11	

TABLE 20. COMPUTERIZED FUNCTIONS. "What functions are accomplished by computer?" Respondents checked blanks by the list of functions. "Other" functions specified were bar coding, compbox check/assignment of numbers, inventory of bank check microfiche locations, complete backup, and records center location guide.

"includes record location." The year before, the 1976 ARMA-Milwaukee study asked "Does your company use electronic data processing (EDP) in its records program?" Sixteen respondents (46%) said yes, and nineteen (54%) said no. Six of the sixteen (38%) who reported using electronic data processing in 1976 checked a blank to indicate they used it for retention scheduling.

Table 21 shows which persons or functions were reported to be responsible for entry of the computerized data for the functions in Table 20. The 45 respondents to the 1990 survey who indicated one or more functions were computerized are represented in Table 21.

Responsible party	Fox Valley	Madison	Milwaukee	Totals	Percent yes
Records manager	3	7	11	21	47
Records analyst	3	2	4	9	20
Owning department	2	5	-	7	16
Other	2	4	8	14	31

TABLE 21. DATA ENTRY RESPONSIBILITY, 1990. "Who is responsible for data entry for the above functions?" Respondents checked one or more blanks by the list of positions. "Other" responses included records department, records center personnel, (college) admissions, sales representative, secretary, MIS, archivist, records technician, steno, systems development, technicians, and State DOA (Department of Administration?). Percentages do not total 100 because some of the 45 respondents checked more than one of the four options.

Table 22 indicates who has access to the records management computer files. The instances where records managers and "other" functions have more write access than read access may indicate that records management is responsible for entering data that is used in departments. Forty-eight percent (22/46) of respondents

reported using microcomputers, as shown in Table 23, and that would limit the number of persons with access wherever microcomputers are self-standing work stations rather than part of a network. Tables 21 and 22 show that records management staff was reported to do data entry four and five times as often as departmental record owners.

Access for:	Chapter	Read		Write		Percent yes	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Read	Write
All employees	Fox Valley	1	10	1	10	9	9
	Madison	1	12	0	14	8	0
	Milwaukee	3	18	1	20	14	5
	TOTALS	5	40	2	44	11	4
Records management	Fox Valley	8	3	7	4	73	64
	Madison	11	2	13	1	85	93
	Milwaukee	13	8	16	5	62	76
	TOTALS	32	13	36	10	71	78
Owning department	Fox Valley	3	8	3	8	27	27
	Madison	3	10	3	11	23	21
	Milwaukee	1	20	1	20	5	5
	TOTALS	7	38	7	39	16	15
Other	Fox Valley	1	10	2	9	9	18
	Madison	0	13	0	14	0	0
	Milwaukee	5	16	4	17	24	19
	TOTALS	6	39	6	40	13	13

TABLE 22. COMPUTER FILE ACCESS, 1990. "Who has read access to records management computer files, and who has write access to records management computer files?" Respondents checked blanks beside one or more options. If any blanks were checked yes for listed options, blanks not checked were assumed to be "no" answers. "Other" responses were student services, deans, people in records, sales representative, records center personnel (twice), secretary, student workers, data processing, and steno (write, but not read access).

The three ARMA chapters differed with regard to the size of computers reported to predominate. A 65% majority of respondents in Milwaukee (13/20) reported using microcomputers. A 57% majority in Madison (8/14) reported using minicomputers. A 58% majority in Fox Valley (7/12) reported using mainframes. It was surprising to find that while more respondents reported use of microcomputers than minicomputers or mainframes, microcomputers were still reported to be under 50% of all the computers used. The continuing organization-wide availability of mainframes or minicomputers as well as microcomputers may explain the phenomenon.

There were nineteen responses to the question in the 1984 Wisconsin survey. Ten (53%) reported mainframe use, three (16%) reported minicomputer use, and six (32%) reported using microcomputers.

Computer size	Fox Valley		Madison		Milwaukee		Totals		
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	% yes
Mainframe	7	5	4	10	7	13	18	28	39
Minicomputer	3	9	8	6	3	17	14	32	30
Microcomputer	2	10	7	7	13	7	22	24	48

TABLE 23. COMPUTER SIZE, 1990. "What size computer(s) are used?" Forty-six respondents checked one or more blanks beside the three options. When there was any positive response from a respondent, blanks were assumed to represent "no" answers.

Table 24 shows the reported origins of software used by records management. Six respondents checked both "purchased" and "developed in-house." The double answers may reflect more than one piece of software or modification of purchased software.

Eight of the eighteen respondents who reported mainframe computers in Table 23 reported their software had been developed in-house. Five more mainframe users reported both purchase and development in-house, for a total of 72% reporting in-house programming. Only 50% (7/14) of the minicomputer users and only 41% (8/22) of the microcomputer users reported in-house programming.

Software source	Fox Valley	Madison	Milwaukee	Totals
Purchased	4	11	13	28
Developed in-house	9	6	9	24

TABLE 24. SOFTWARE SOURCES, 1990. "Was your software: ___ Purchased; ___ Leased; ___ Developed in-house?" Forty-six people responded. Nobody checked "Leased."

Table 25 shows the categories of software unrelated to records management that were reported to be mounted on the computer system along with records management software.

Function	n
Word processing	18
Accounting/spreadsheets	11
Database management	6
Project management	2
Multiple unnamed functions	12
Archives	1
Calendaring	1
Case management	1
Electronic mail	1
Library	1
Personnel	1
Purchasing	1

TABLE 25. SHARED COMPUTER FUNCTIONS. "What non-records-management functions are on the same computer system?" A long blank was provided for responses, which were categorized at the time of analysis.

Disposition practices

Table 26 shows the reported frequency of record destruction in 1982 and 1990. Annual destruction was and is the mode, with monthly destruction in a distant second place.

Frequency	Fox Valley		Madison		Milwaukee		1990 totals		1982 totals		Percent yes	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1990	1982
Daily	1	13	2	19	1	20	4	52	9	83	7	10
Weekly	0	14	1	20	1	20	2	54	9	83	4	10
Monthly	2	12	4	17	6	15	12	44	17	75	21	18
Quarterly	0	14	1	20	1	20	2	54	17	75	4	18
Semiannually	1	13	1	20	2	19	4	52	15	77	7	16
Annually	8	6	18	3	10	11	36	20	63	29	64	68
Other	4	10	3	18	3	18	10	46	13	79	18	14

TABLE 26. DESTRUCTION FREQUENCY. "Which of the following most accurately describes the scheduled destruction of your records? (If more than one, please specify proportions.)" There were 56 responses. Nine respondents checked two intervals, and one checked six intervals. "Other" responses specified in 1990 were shredded after filming, as records are microfilmed, as needed, whenever, monthly in-house & annually by service, monthly 15% & annually 85%, at will of owner, when out of room, retention entries are reviewed annually at staggered months ("monthly" checked), quarterly 1 division & annually 6 divisions, 40 or more years, none yet, and none. The 1982 data is from the report on the 1982 survey "Records Disposition Practices," Records Management Quarterly 16:4 (October 1982): 50.

Figure 11, parts A-D show the proportions of record destruction reported to occur in-house and by outside services in 1990 and 1982. The percentage of records destroyed in-house is increasing at the same time as the number of destruction and recycling services and the amount of business they do is increasing. (Five recycling companies were represented at a 1991 ARMA-Milwaukee Chapter meeting. Two of the five were under five years of age, and all reported that they were handling steadily increasing amounts of waste.) The fact that the total number of

records being recycled is increasing at the same time as in-house destruction increases indicates that the total number of records being destroyed is increasing.

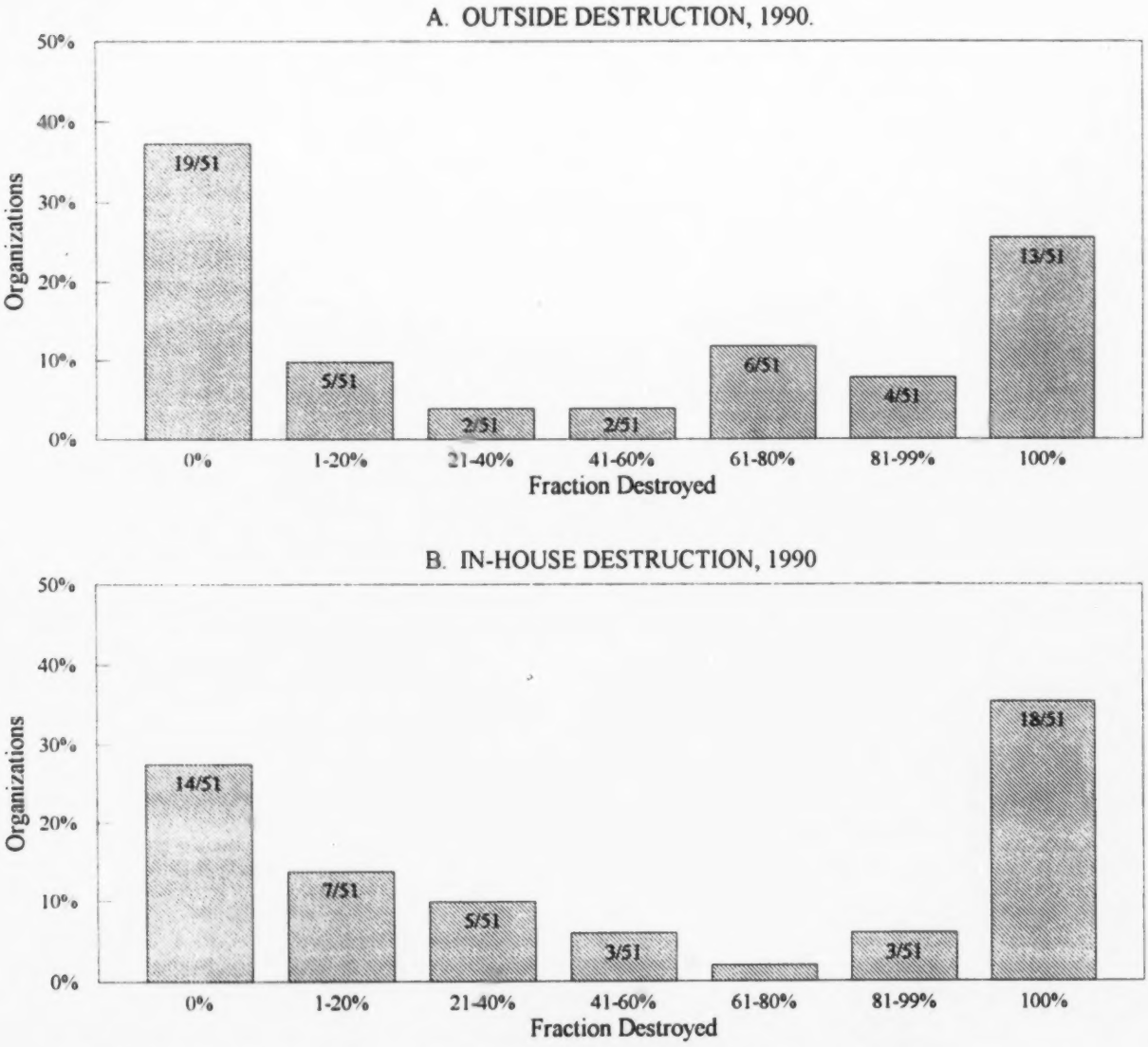
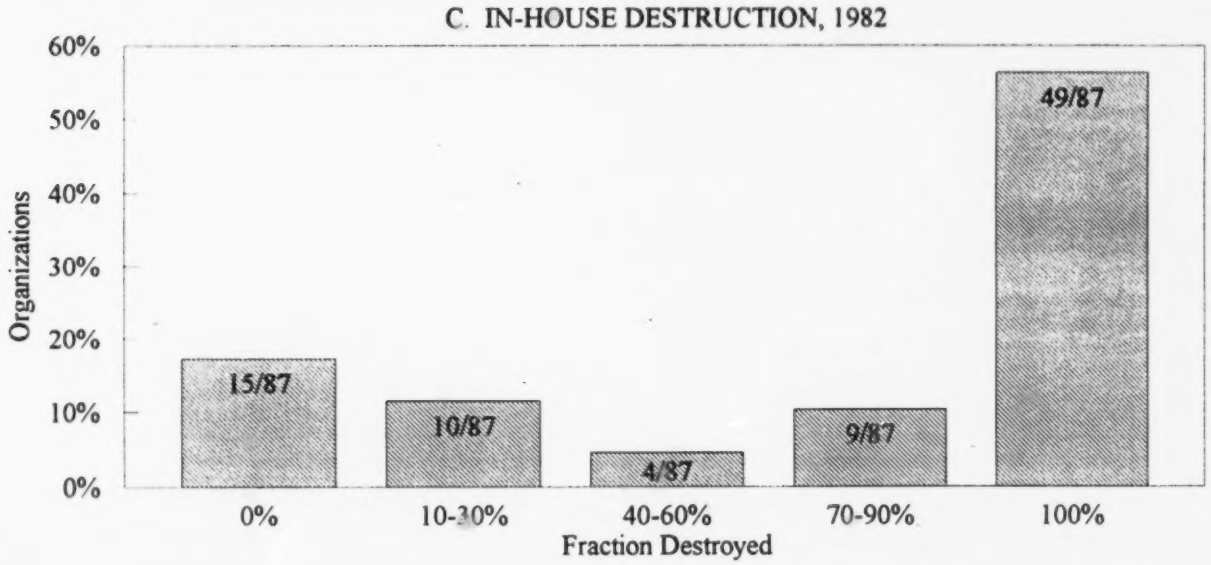


FIGURE 11, A and B. IN-HOUSE DESTRUCTION VS. DESTRUCTION SERVICE, 1990. "When records are destroyed (made unreadable), what fraction is destroyed in-house and what fraction by an outside service?" Forty-nine respondents checked blanks adjacent to the above options. The 0% and 100% in and out of house figures do not reciprocate because one Madison Chapter respondent checked 0% for both in and out of house destruction.



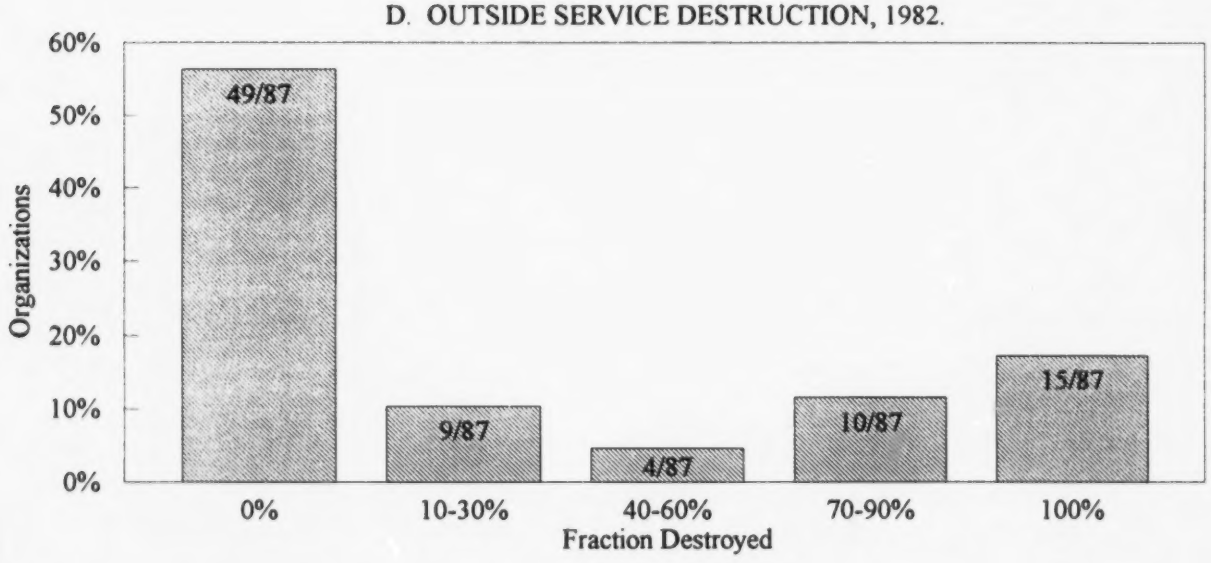


FIGURE 11, C and D. IN-HOUSE DESTRUCTION VS. DESTRUCTION SERVICE, 1982. The data is from the report on the 1982 Wisconsin survey, "Records Disposition Practices," Records Management Quarterly 16:4 (October 1982): 50.

Table 27 shows the methods of destruction reported in 1976, 1982, and 1990. Burning as a destruction method has declined in popularity, perhaps due to its expense and the increased availability and convenience of other methods. The percentage of "yes" answers in 1982 may be artificially low due to non-responses having been counted as "no" answers.

Christensen found comparable results in a 1982 survey of U.S. companies in twelve cities throughout the United States. Fifty-eight percent (39/67) reported using shredders. Forty-two percent (29/69) reported selling materials being discarded to scrap dealers. Seven percent (5/67) used landfill, and twelve percent (8/67) reported "dumpster (throw away/garbage)." Thirteen percent (9/67) reported using incineration.[9]

There was strong correlation between recycling and maturity of the records management program as indicated by the number of years respondents indicated retention schedules had been in effect. When the data from Figure 6 was compared with reports of recycling, the correlation was r=.42 with a significance level of .004.

The correlation between organization size and reported recycling was very similar. When the data from Figures 2 and 3 was compared with recycling responses in Table 27, the correlation was r=.45 at a .001 significance level. Correlations for other destruction methods were not significant enough to report.

Method	Fox Valley		Madison		Milwaukee		1990 totals		1982 totals		1976 totals		Percent yes		
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1990	1982	1976
Shredding	12	3	17	2	18	4	47	9	52	40	22	5	84	56	81
Burning	2	13	5	14	2	20	9	47	20	72	20	7	16	22	74
Vatting	2	13	1	18	0	22	3	53	4	88	2	25	5	4	7
Erasure	1	14	5	14	0	22	6	50					12		
Recycling	8	7	17	2	10	12	35	21	43	49	20	7	63	47	74
Landfill	6	9	3	16	4	18	13	43	23	69			23	25	
Other	0	15	1	18	0	22	1	55	16	76	7	20	2	17	26

TABLE 27. METHODS OF DESTRUCTION. "How are records destroyed?" Respondents checked the above options. It was assumed that if "yes" was checked for any method, not checking another blank was equivalent to a "no" answer. The "other" method reported by one respondent in 1990 was "trash," and may be equivalent to landfill. The seven "other" answers in 1976 include five that were marked "other" and two that were positive responses to "compaction"; it is impossible to tell whether the two "compaction" responses were from the same respondents as "other" responses. The statistics for the 1976 survey option "sell as scrap" are entered in the "recycling" category in this table. The 1982 data is from the report on the 1982 Wisconsin survey "Records Disposition Practices," Records Management Quarterly 16:4 (October 1982): 50.

Response	Fox Valley		Madison		Milwaukee		Totals		
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	% yes
Specified	2	12	3	17	4	16	9	45	17
Not known	10	4	15	5	11	9	36	18	67
Not centralized	2	12	2	18	5	15	9	45	17

TABLE 28. DESTRUCTION CAPACITY CATEGORIES, 1990. Number of responses to "What is the capacity of centralized destruction equipment in pounds per year? (A cubic foot holds approximately 40 pounds of paper.) ___ pounds, ___ not known, ___ no centralized destruction."

Pounds	Methods checked	In house	Out of house
170,000	Shredding, recycling	11-20%	71-80%
102,400	Shredding, burning, recycling	1-10%	81-90%
48,000	Recycling	0%	100%
40,000	Shredding, recycling	100%	0%
8,000	Burning	0%	100%
2,000	Shredding, vatting	11-20%	71-80%
960	Shredding, recycling, other (trash)	100%	0%
300	Shredding	0%	100%
270	Shredding	1-10%	91-99%

TABLE 29. DESTRUCTION CAPACITY IN POUNDS, 1990. The questions regarding destruction methods and location were reported with Table 28 and Figure 11.

Table 28 shows the number of responses to a question about the annual amount of centralized record destruction. Only nine

respondents specified a quantity, presumably because the rest of the respondents did not have the information. Table 29 lists the nine responses. The average amount of records reported destroyed was 41,326 pounds, and the median amount was 8,000 pounds.

Table 30 shows the reported use of destruction witnesses and certification in 1990. Forty-three percent (25/58) of respondents indicated that their organizations did not require a witness, and 42% (23/55) indicated that certification was not required. The 1982 report on the combined Madison and Milwaukee Chapters indicated that 51% (44/86) of respondents did not require a witness, and 61% (51/83) did not require certification. The percentage of organizations not reporting use of witnesses and certification had decreased between 1982 and 1990. The decrease may reflect a growing awareness of information security needs among records managers. It also could be a direct result of the increased use of external destruction services reflected in Figure 11, either because using witnesses and certification is a standard procedure at destruction services or because administrators require extra security precautions when records are taken off-site for destruction.

Twenty percent (17/86) of the respondents to the 1982 Madison and Milwaukee ARMA survey said a witness to record destruction was required, and 30% (25/83) said certification was required. The use of witnesses in special cases was reported by 29% (25/86), and certification in special cases by 8% (7/83).[10] Christensen reported that in 1982, 52% (15/29) of a sample of

companies in twelve cities throughout the U.S. that used scrap dealers required certification of destruction.[11]

Function	Chapter	Responses			Percentages		
		Yes	Some cases	No	Yes	Some cases	No
Witness required?	Fox Valley	4	5	7	25	31	44
	Madison	3	11	6	15	55	30
	Milwaukee	5	5	12	23	23	54
	Total	12	21	25	21	36	43
Certification required?	Fox Valley	3	3	8	22	22	57
	Madison	3	10	5	17	55	28
	Milwaukee	9	4	10	39	17	44
	Total	15	17	23	27	31	42

TABLE 30. DESTRUCTION SECURITY, 1990. "Is a witness required for destruction, in addition to the person doing it? ___ Yes, ___ In special cases, ___ No. Is destruction of the majority of your records certified? ___ Yes, ___ Only in special cases, ___ No."

Table 31 shows that in 1990 half of respondents reported that federal contracts or regulations influenced the timing of record destruction, but only about one in four reported that federal contracts or regulations influenced the method of destruction. The responses are closer to each other than in 1982, when 71% (61/86) of respondents in the Milwaukee and Madison Chapters indicated that destruction timing was influenced by "federal contracts or regulations," and 13% (11/86) indicated that the method of destruction was influenced.[12]

It is possible that the emphasis given to the Paperwork Reduction Act in records management literature has heightened awareness of destruction methods and reduced the fraction of controlled records. The increasing number of recycling agency representatives visiting records managers also may have contributed to the change.

Response	Fox Valley		Madison		Milwaukee		Totals		
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	% yes
Timing	9	6	9	12	10	10	28	28	50
Method	3	12	7	13	4	16	14	41	25

TABLE 31. EFFECT OF FEDERAL REGULATION, 1990. "Do federal contracts or regulations influence the timing or method of record destruction?"

Table 32 shows the destruction methods reported by respondents who said the destruction method was influenced by federal regulations. The 1982 report on the Milwaukee-Madison survey indicated that when 11 respondents who indicated that the method was influenced by government regulation were asked for the destruction method, 9 checked shredding, 3 checked burning, 1 checked recycling, and 2 checked other.[13] The increase in recycling since 1982 may reflect easier access to recycling services and social pressure to recycle.

Method	Fox Valley		Madison		Milwaukee		Totals		
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	% yes
Shredding	3	0	7	0	4	0	14	0	100
Burning	0	3	1	6	1	3	2	12	14
Vatting	1	2	0	7	0	4	1	13	7
Erasure	0	3	0	7	0	4	0	14	0
Recycling	0	3	5	2	2	2	7	7	50
Landfill	0	3	0	6	0	4	0	14	0
Other	0	3	1	6	0	4	1	13	7

TABLE 32. DESTRUCTION METHOD AFFECTED BY FEDERAL REGULATIONS, 1990. "If federal regulations influence the destruction method, which is used?" It was assumed that if "yes" was checked for any method, not checking another blank was equivalent to a "no" answer. The respondent who checked "Other" wrote in "Confidential," after checking both the shredding and recycling blanks.

Table 33 indicates the number of 1990 respondents that reported separating material by format prior to destruction. The 1982 Madison and Milwaukee Chapter survey found that thirty-six respondents checked yes, they separated materials, and 49 checked no (42% yes, 58% no).[14] The 1982 report did not offer the "sometimes" option. It is likely that the 19% decrease in "no" answers is related to the increase by 1/3 of respondents who reported recycling between 1982 and 1990, shown in Table 27.

Chapter	Responses			Percentages		
	Yes	Some-times	No	Yes	Some-times	No
Fox Valley	2	8	5	13	53	33
Madison	6	6	9	29	29	43
Milwaukee	1	13	9	4	57	39
Total	9	27	23	15	46	39

TABLE 33. FORMAT CONTROL AT DESTRUCTION, 1990. "Are records separated by form for destruction, e.g., card stock, paper, computer printouts, film?
___ Yes, ___ No, ___ Sometimes" Respondents checked a blank.

Table 34 shows the proportion of 1990 survey respondents who reported using standardized containers for records. The 1982 report on the Milwaukee and Madison Chapters had 77 yes, 1 both, and 11 no answers to the question (87%/ 1%/12%).[15] The decrease from 12% to 5% "no" answers from 1982 to 1990 may indicate a trend toward standardized containers. It also may reflect increasing numbers of record-container vendors covering the area more thoroughly and getting more contracts.

Table 34 also indicates the number of 1990 survey respondents who reported destroying record containers along with records. The equivalent 1982 figures from the Milwaukee and Madison Chapter survey were 20 yes, 5 both, and 61 no (24%/ 6%/71%).[16] The decrease in "no" answers from 1982 to 1990 may reflect the increase in the number of organizations using shredding and recycling as a method of destroying records shown in Table 27.

The decrease in the number that reported burning records also may be a factor.

Container situation	Chapter	Responses			Percentages		
		Yes	Some-times	No	Yes	Some-times	No
Standardized?	Fox Valley	13	2	0	87	13	0
	Madison	18	2	1	86	10	5
	Milwaukee	19	3	2	79	12	8
	Total	50	7	3	83	12	5
Destroyed?	Fox Valley	3	3	9	20	20	60
	Madison	6	3	10	32	16	53
	Milwaukee	3	5	15	13	22	65
	Total	12	11	34	21	19	60

TABLE 34. STORAGE CONTAINER SITUATION, 1990. "Do you use standardized containers for storing records (boxes, not vertical or lateral files)? ___ Yes, ___ No, ___ Sometimes. Are storage containers destroyed with their records? ___ Yes, ___ No, ___ Sometimes." Respondents checked blanks.

Table 35 shows the number of 1990 survey respondents who reported use of local or federal security classification systems. Twenty-three respondents indicated they used at least one security classification system. Six of the seven respondents using federal classification systems indicated they also used local classification systems.

Classification system	Fox Valley		Madison		Milwaukee		Totals		
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	% yes
Government	3	11	3	12	1	19	7	42	14
Local	7	8	8	11	7	16	22	35	39

TABLE 35. SECURITY CLASSIFICATIONS, 1990. "Are records assigned security classifications? Respondents checked blanks for yes or no after the phrases "U.S. Gov't (CONFIDENTIAL, SECRET, TOP SECRET)" and "Local organization's own classifications."

Table 36 shows that the majority of 1990 survey respondents using security classification systems felt that the classifications determined the degree of security under which documents were stored and the method of document destruction.

Affected procedures	Fox Valley		Madison		Milwaukee		Totals		
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	% yes
Degree of security	3	11	3	12	1	19	7	42	14
Destruction means	7	8	8	11	7	16	22	35	39

TABLE 36. EFFECT OF CLASSIFICATION, 1990. "If yes to either (above question, federal or local security classification systems used?), (a) do the classifications determine the degree of security of storage, and (b) do the classifications determine the destruction method?" Respondents checked blanks for yes or no.

Effects of federal legislation

It is not surprising that respondents reported few recent new activities because of the Right to Privacy and Freedom of Information Acts, because major legislative action was completed in the 1970s. It is very surprising how little attention respondents indicated has been given to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980's effect, especially in light of the emphasis on proposed changes in the Act in recent professional literature. It was expected that the Right of Privacy (1974 and 1978) and Paperwork Reduction legislation would be perceived to restrict access and reduce the number of records that had to be kept, while the Freedom of Information Act (1966 and 1974) would make records more accessible to users and require government agencies to keep more records on file. It was expected that the Paperwork Reduction Act would be reported to have the greatest effect of the three, because of thorough discussion in the recent records management literature. Surprisingly, all three pieces of legislation were represented similarly in the survey responses.

Table 37 shows that over 80% of respondents in 1990 indicated that the listed federal acts had not led to changes in the number of records retained. The 1977 ARMA-Milwaukee survey asked "Has your retention program been affected by the freedom of information and/or privacy legislation?" Nine (24%) responded yes, and 28 (76%) responded no. The 1977 survey also asked whether retention periods had been lengthened or shortened

because of the legislation. Forty percent (8/20) said lengthened, and 12% (2/16) said shortened. The decrease in the reported influence of legislation from 1977 to 1990 could be because the legislation was in place before the records management careers of many 1990 respondents.

Legislation	Chapter	Effect on quality		
		Increased	Unchanged	Decreased
Freedom of Information Act	Fox Valley	3	10	0
	Madison	4	14	0
	Milwaukee	2	15	0
	Total	9	39	0
	% of total	19%	81%	0%
Right to Privacy Act	Fox Valley	3	10	0
	Madison	3	15	0
	Milwaukee	2	15	0
	Total	8	40	0
	% of total	17%	83%	0%
Paperwork Reduction Act	Fox Valley	2	11	0
	Madison	3	15	0
	Milwaukee	2	15	1
	Total	7	41	1
	% of total	14%	84%	2%

TABLE 37. EFFECT OF LEGISLATION ON QUANTITY OF RECORDS, 1990. "Has new legislation passed in the last two decades let to change in the number of documents kept?" Respondents checked boxes by "increased, unchanged, or decreased" for the Freedom of Information Act, Right to Privacy Laws, and the Paperwork Reduction Act. The 39 respondents who checked "unchanged" for the Freedom of Information Act all checked "unchanged" for the other two acts as well.

It is not clear why 14% of respondents to the 1990 survey indicated that the Paperwork Reduction Act increased the number of records kept. It could be that respondents disregarded the laws listed in the question, and indicated that more records were being kept because of unrelated new legislation or because they deal with ever-increasing volumes of new records.

Legislation	Chapter	Effect on security		
		Increased	Unchanged	Decreased
Freedom of Information Act	Fox Valley	1	13	0
	Madison	3	13	0
	Milwaukee	1	15	2
	Total	5	41	2
	% of total	10%	85%	4%
Right to Privacy Act	Fox Valley	1	13	0
	Madison	2	14	0
	Milwaukee	4	14	0
	Total	7	41	0
	% of total	15%	85%	0%
Paperwork Reduction Act	Fox Valley	1	13	0
	Madison	1	15	0
	Milwaukee	1	17	0
	Total	3	45	0
	% of total	6%	94%	0%

TABLE 38. EFFECT OF LEGISLATION ON SECURITY, 1990. "Has the new legislation led to change in the degree of security or difficulty of access?" Respondents checked boxes by "increased, unchanged, or decreased" for the Freedom of Information Act, Right to Privacy Laws, and the Paperwork Reduction Act.

Table 38 shows that 85% or more of respondents indicated that major new federal legislation had not led to changes in the degree of security under which records were held. Seventeen respondents to the 1977 ARMA-Milwaukee survey (61%) indicated that access security had not been increased because of the legislation. Eleven (39%) said it had.

Table 39 indicates that few 1990 respondents reported knowledge that anyone had checked the retention schedule to assure compliance with the legislation. The 1977 ARMA-Milwaukee survey asked "Have you needed to search your records to determine information which may be affected by this legislation?" Ten respondents (36%) said yes, and 18 (64%) said no.

Legislation	Fox Valley		Madison		Milwaukee		Totals		
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	% yes
Freedom of Information	0	6	0	10	2	12	2	28	7
Right to Privacy	0	6	0	10	3	11	3	27	10
Paperwork Reduction	0	6	0	10	1	13	1	29	3

TABLE 39. EFFECT OF LEGISLATION ON RETENTION SCHEDULE, 1990. "Has anyone examined your retention schedule to find entries that should be changed because of new legislation?" Respondents checked blanks by FOIA, RTP, and PRA, and identified the party who made the check. The checkers were identified as legal counsel, college registrar, city attorney, records management, company attorneys, accounting/DP, records manager-corporate secretary dept, records, outside consultant, and court analyst-court rec.-management committee.

Tables 40 shows the parties that respondents indicated were responsible at their organizations for monitoring new legislation in 1990. Thirty-eight percent (17/45) of respondents to the question checked "nobody." The 1990 study found that 32% of the 28 positive responses to the question indicated records management responsibility. The 1977 ARMA-Milwaukee study, with 30% (14/46) responding positively, found no report of records management responsibility.

1990			1977		
Office	n	Percent	Office	n	Percent
Legal department	13	46	Legal department	7	50
Records management	9	32	Industrial/employee relations	4	29
General manager/admin.	3	11	General manager (and like pos'ns)	2	14
Record owner	1	4	Other	1	7
Purchasing	1	4			
Accounting/DP	1	4			

TABLE 40. RESPONSIBILITY FOR MONITORING LEGISLATION. "Who is responsible for monitoring such legislation?" Respondents filled in a blank or checked "nobody." The answers were categorized at the time of analysis.

Discussion

There are indications that large organizations have stabler records management programs than small organizations. Large organizations were found to have retention schedules more often

than small organizations, and the retention schedules were found to have been in existence longer at large organizations than small ones. A greater fraction of large organizations have legal representation on retention schedule committees. A greater fraction of large organizations are organized enough to recycle discarded records.

The changes that are occurring with time are in the direction of greater control of records. More organizations require addition of entries in retention schedules when new documents are created. More organizations are making committees responsible for establishing retention schedules, though the average number of representatives on the committees is falling. Records managers are able to identify more parties responsible for records retention decisions. More operating departments are receiving copies of retention schedules. Records managers are responsible for more auditing of department retention practices. More witnessing and certification is being required when records are destroyed.

It was not surprising to find that use of computers has been increasing over the past fifteen years. It was surprising to find that over half the respondents to a question about records management software reported some degree of software development in-house.

The situations and trends found in this study were almost all encouraging to those of us who consider records management a profession. Two situations were found to be disappointing, and

worthy of new educational activities at both the chapter and ARMA International level. First, respondents reported surprisingly little awareness of the effects of federal legislation on retention schedules or activity to monitor such legislation. Second, over 30% of respondents reported that records management at their organizations was a clerical or paraprofessional operation, rather than professional.

More research is needed to determine if the trends and situations noted here are local phenomena, or represent the situation throughout much of the United States. The reported responses are likely to be representative of a broad section of ARMA chapters, because the three surveyed chapters serve three different kinds and sizes of metropolitan areas in the midwestern U.S., a region that is often assumed to be representative of the national situation for polling purposes.

The authors of this study will provide the data from the 1990 survey in machine readable format to anyone who needs it for further analysis.

ENDNOTES

1. Dr. Wilmer Maedke, "Records Management Profession: Status and Trends," Records Management Quarterly (July 1976): 42.

2. "Records Disposition Practices," Records Management Quarterly (October 1982): 48.

3. County Business Patterns 1988: Wisconsin (CBP 88-51). (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990), p. 3.

4. Maedke, "Records Management Profession," 43.

5. Mary F. Robek, Gerald F. Brown, and Wilmer O. Maedke, Information and Records Management, 3d ed. (Encino, CA: Glencoe Pub. Co., 1987), p. 106.

6. Barbara A. Christensen, "An analysis of Active Storage Areas, Equipment, and Supplies," Records Management Quarterly 16:2 (April 1982): 58.

7. Maedke, "Records Management Profession," 43.

8. Ibid.

9. Christensen, 40-1.

10. "Records Disposition Practices," 52.

11. Christensen, 40.

12. "Records Disposition Practices," 52.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid., 54.